WILSON'S NUMISMATIC REPOSITORY

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Welcome to the first issue of "Wilson's Numismatic Repository," and it is my most fervent hope that you will enjoy the comments offered here and in the few following pages. The intent of this little periodical is not necessarily to present information of earth-shattering importance, but rather to have a little fun, and perhaps create the medium for an open forum for the exchange of ideas, comments, opinions, etc., relating to the pursuit and enjoyment of numismatic literature. At present, I have no delusions of issuing this periodical on a regular basis, as the operation of a one-man business precludes such foolishness. However, I fully intend to publish from three to six issues annually if it is enthusiastically received by its recipients. All persons presently on my mailing list will receive copies, and it will be made available to anyone requesting it at no cost. Now, even if it's not very good, the price should spur the aforementioned enthusiasm.

Some of you have been customers since I first began issuing fixed price lists nearly two and a half years ago; and I have been privileged to meet many of you personally during the A.N.A. and other regional, state and local conventions. For those of you who may only recently have communicated with me, perhaps a very brief biography is in order. Even if it's not, this is my publication, and I can do anything I want to. So, here goes.

I first saw the light of day on August 18, 1944 in Pensacola, Florida, the first-born of a career Navy family. Being a service "brat" had a strong influence on my early interest in numismatics, as my father quite frequently was deployed to "far away places with strange sounding names," affording him the opportunity to obtain the coinages of the various countries he visited. These odd little pieces were generally dispersed among my two younger brothers and myself; however, I was the only one of the three of us to seriously pursue numismatic study with any interest. During the mid fifties, while attempting to earn my Boy Scout merit badge in coin collecting, I had the good fortune to encounter a fine and wise coin dealer in the small hamlet of Brunswick, Maine where my father was stationed at the time. He was the local counselor for our scout troop, and it was during my first visit that he advised me to follow the wisdom of the late Aaron Feldman and "buy the book before the coin." So it was, that on that Fall day in 1957, I began my numismatic "library" with a brand new copy of the thirteenth edition "Redbook." I became obsessed with the hobby in general and, having always been a voracious reader, with the bibliophilic end specifically. My collecting interests continued unabated until I graduated from high school in 1962. From that time until about six years ago, the hobby had lost me. After leaving college, I ventured West and settled in Sacramento, California where I began my professional career in the container industry. In 1968, I married Lynne Elliott, and for the next six years the two of us spent our time alternating between the West Coast and the Midwest as a result of frequent transfers offered by my employer. Finally, in 1974, I changed companies and settled in Fremont, California. I was finally able to "settle down" in one place, and at

that time, my numismatic yearnings resurfaced stronger than ever. Having been removed from the hobby for some twelve years, I soon discovered that a virtual "mountain" of information and literature had been dispensed during my hiatus. I had to have it all. Though, at the time, I was still more of a coin collector than bibliophile, I felt the need to buy everything printed on the hobby. It wasn't long before the quest for knowledge prevailed over the desire to collect the actual coins, and I soon found myself buying entire libraries to obtain that one or two pieces I just had to have. By now, I was vest-pocketing as a coin dealer at local shows, and I began offering a few duplicate books at my table. Surprisingly, interest in the literature was quite strong, and within a period of less than six months, I was setting up at the shows with only books, having almost totally disposed of my coin holdings. But, coin shows only come about once a week, and I had to be more involved than that. So early in 1980, I ran my first advertisement in "Coin World" and "Numismatic News," offering a complete set of Redbooks, and requesting want lists. I was deluged with offers to buy and sell books, periodicals, catalogues and all manner of related material. It soon became apparent that in order to properly service the needs of my new-found customers, I would be forced to make perhaps the most important decision of my life. After more than fifteen years in manufacturing, and with a fine upper-level management position which allowed me to live quite "comfortably," I made the decision to try the book market on a full time basis. That was just over a year ago, and I have no regrets so far. Certainly, the financial rewards, so far, are considerably less than when I was surrounded by the security of a nice "guaranteed" salary. But at the same time, I have never enjoyed myself more, and I wouldn't trade anything for the many friendships which I have acquired in the past fourteen months. I plan to stay in this business for a looooong time!

As most of you are probably aware by now, John W. Adams's new book "United States Numismatic Literature - Volume One" was released during the recent A.N.A. Convention in Boston. As of this writing, I have read the work thoroughly about five times, and highly recommend it to any of you who are interested in the field of early auction catalogues. John writes with a free-flowing, readable style which is so often missing in scholarly references. To read this masterpiece is to feel transported back in time. You lay it down with the feeling that you know Edward Cogan, William Strobridge, the Chapman's, Lyman Low, and all the other "founding fathers" on a first name basis. Whether you are a bibliophile or a researcher, this book is a must for any numismatic library. I was pleased to note in Frank Katen's 55th Sale Catalogue that he is nominating this fine work for the Clemmy award, the Numismatic Literary Guild's highest honor. It certainly deserves it. Interested parties can obtain a copy from George Frederick Kolbe, 23881 Via Fabricante, Mission Viejo, CA 92691. Price is $85.00 postpaid.

In recent weeks, a small but serious group of bibliophiles has been working to formalize a convention for numismatic literature collectors. For the past several years, the Numismatic Bibliomania Society has conducted a meeting in conjuction with the A.N.A. Conventions. A number of N.B.S. members have expressed the feeling that our ranks are now sufficient to warrant a formal convention devoted specifically to our area of the hobby. During the Long Beach show last weekend, an organizational meeting was held to try and set the wheels in motion. The general concensus is that we should attempt to hold a convention of our own one or two days prior to a major regional show. I still strongly support the N.B.S./A.N.A. gathering, but as the last four A.N.A.'s have been held East of the Mississippi River, I feel we lose out on a goodly number of collectors. More on this subject next time.

Congratulations to Denis Loring on his Best Of Show award at Boston A.N.A. It was a fantastic exhibit, and also Denis's first attempt at an A.N.A. convention. There was also another fine exhibit in Boston prepared by bibliophile Bob Wester of Suncook, New Hampshire. It was a five case display commemorating the life and work of Sylvester Sage Crosby. Again, congratulations to both of these fine gentlemen for their efforts.

I was recently interviewed by Jim Lyons, editor of a fine investment newsletter titled "Coinwatch." Departing from this publication's primary function as an investment tool, Jim and I discussed other aspects of the reasons for collecting numismatic literature. Aside from the valuable reference value of the books, my biggest enjoyment arises from the romanticism which is interspersed throughout the late nineteenth century volumes. One of the questions I was asked was, "What has been your biggest thrill in the numismatic literature field?" Without hesitating, I replied that reading one of Joseph Mickley's personal diaries had to go down as my most thrilling moment. This particular diary was sold by George Kolbe to a collector several years ago, but I had the good fortune to be in George's shop when the item arrived, and was privileged to be able to peruse it for a period of time. It covered the period prior to and just after Mickley's home had been burglarized, and a large portion of his collection stolen in 1867. The diary, to me, was a living, breathing first-hand account of a portion of the private life of the father of modern coin collecting.

Jim remarked that, except for the infrequent appearance of such a personal item, much of the true nature of these early collectors, and dealers, has been handed down through the decades through second and third hand channels, and perhaps we may view these early pioneers in a much different light than we should. He also

brought up a valid point regarding the "legends of our own time." Whereas in the nineteenth century we had to depend on such sources as newspaper obituaries, numismatic periodicals and the like for a glimpse of the prominent people of the time, today we have the resources of tape recorders and video cassette machines which enable us to record, first hand, the experiences and contributions of our present day luminaries. Jim interviewed me with the aid of a cassette tape recorder, as he has done with all of his previous interviews in the past several years. He stated that eventually, he hoped to donate the tapes to the American Numismatic Association to be placed in its archives for posterity. Now, nothing that I had to say during the interview will be of lasting importance; however, Jim has been fortunate to have interviewed a number of our hobby's leaders in the past, and I'm sure that some day in the far distant future, some numismatic scholar will play these tapes, and be privileged to hear "how it was" right from the horse's mouth.

In this vein, I feel that it would be rather "neat" to record the reminiscences of our modern hobby leaders. Many of us know at least a few of these distinguished numismatists, and I would encourage those of you who might have the opportunity, to see if you can locate willing participants for such a project. In last week's "Coin World" there appeared a number of moving tributes in memory of the late Amon Carter, Jr. Most of the statements included an anecdote or two concerning the life of this wonderful man, but wouldn't it have been nice to have had Mr. Carter relate these experiences first hand? Aye, say I.

Finally, I want to take this opportunity to invite your comments and critiques of this humble publication. As I mentioned at the beginning, I would like to create a medium for an open forum amongst our number, and to this end, I will be more than happy to print your correspondence. It is not my purpose to offer this periodical as an advertising tool; however, I will also print lists of items for sale or trade, and wants of those who wish to correspond. If the response warrants, perhaps the next issue can be expanded from four to eight or even twelve pages. If you have read this far, it has become apparent that I possess not a great amount of skill as a scribe; therefore, let me hear from you so that these pages may be filled with more than the ramblings of a slightly demented bibliophile.

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